

## Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SIG-01  
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TO ALL EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: NEW DRAFT SOVIET CONSTITUTION

REF: MOSCOW 7916

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FOR USNATO: MISSION AUTHORIZED TO CIRCULATE TEXT FOR DISCUSSION AT POLADS

1. FOLLOWING IS INR'S PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE NEW DRAFT SOVIET CONSTITUTION WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN "PRAVDA", ON JUNE 4.

BEGIN SUMMARY: INR AGREES WITH EMBASSY MOSCOW THAT THE NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION PUBLISHED JUNE 4 IS DESIGNED TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF THE USSR AS A MATURE, DEVELOPED, CONFIDENT SOCIALIST SOCIETY. IT CONTAINS PROVISIONS FURTHER FUELING SPECULATION THAT BREZHNEV WILL TAKE OVER THE PRESIDENCY. THE DRAFT EXTOLS BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS, BUT HEAVILY SUBORDINATES THEM TO DUTIES TO THE STATE. THE LEADING ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS ALSO MADE MORE EXPLICIT THAN IN THE 1936 CONSTITUTION. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT: THE DRAFT ESTABLISHES FOR THE FIRST TIME THE POSITION OF FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDIUM OF THE

USSR SUPREME SOVIET, PRESUMABLY TO RELIEVE THE PRESIDENT OF HIS MANY PROTOCOLARY BURDENS. IT THUS REINFORCES THE FEELING THAT BREZHNEV WILL TAKE OVER THE PRESIDENCY FROM PODGORNY, DROPPED FROM THE POLITBURO LAST MONTH. WERE HE TO DO SO, THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S PRESTIGE WOULD BE ENHANCED AND HIS TRAVELS ABROAD AND RIGHT TO SIGN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS SIMPLIFIED.

THE NEW CHAPTER ON FOREIGN POLICY AFFIRMS THE PRINCIPLE OF "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" AND THE "LENINIST POLICY OF PEACE," BUT MAKES NO MENTION OF DETENTE PER SE. IT DOES NOT REPEAT BREZHNEV'S REMARKS AT THE MAY 24TH CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM THAT "CAPITALIST ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE USSR EXISTS NO MORE" AND THAT A "REAL POSSIBILITY HAS APPEARED OF PREVENTING A NEW WORLD WAR." ALTHOUGH IT ENSHRINES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE HELSINKI CSCE FINAL ACT AS THE BASIS OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES, YET ANOTHER CHAPTER ON THE "DEFENSE OF THE SOCIALIST MOTHERLAND" ASSURES ONE AND ALL THAT THE STATE SHALL "EQUIP THE ARMED FORCES OF THE USSR WITH EVERYTHING NECESSARY." BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS ARE LAVISHLY ELABORATED. THE LENINIST-STALINIST "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT" HAS GIVEN WAY TO THE "STATE OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE." NEVERTHELESS, CIVIL RIGHTS ARE CLEARLY TO BE SUBORDINATED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE STATE:

--AS IN THE 1936 VERSION, CITIZENS ARE GUARANTEED FREEDOMS SUCH AS THOSE OF SPEECH, PRESS, AND ASSEMBLY. UNLIKE 1936, SUCH RIGHTS ARE REPEATEDLY MADE SECONDARY TO THE NEEDS OF THE STATE AND CITIZENS ARE ENJOINED "TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF ITS MIGHT AND PRESTIGE."

--PROVISOS GOVERNING RELIGION REMAIN LARGELY UNCHANGED

FROM 1936.

AS WAS EXPECTED, THE DRAFT FURTHER CODIFIES AND ELABORATES ON THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY -- MENTIONED ONLY BRIEFLY IN THE 1936 CONSTITUTION. THE CPSU IS DESCRIBED AS "THE LEADING AND GUIDING FORCE OF SOVIET SOCIETY AND THE NUCLEUS OF ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM, OF ALL STATE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS." IN A FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING PARTY ORGANIZATIONS, DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM IS NOW STATED TO BE THE OPERATING PHILOSOPHY FOR ALL GOVERNMENT ORGANS.

THE DRAFT DOES NOT INTRODUCE ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE OR IN ITS RULING BODIES, AND THE RIGHT OF SECESSION OF UNION-REPUBLICS IS MAINTAINED. HOWEVER,

--THE DEFENSE COUNCIL, OF WHICH BREZHNEV IS CHAIRMAN,  
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GAINS CONSTITUTIONALrecognition, AS DOES THE PRESID-  
IUM OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, HEADED BY KOSYGIN.

--ELECTIONS TO THE SUPREME SOVIET WILL TAKE PLACE EVERY FIVE YEARS INSTEAD OF FOUR, PROBABLY TO COINCIDE WITH THE CONVOCATION OF PARTY CONGRESSES AND THE PROMULGATION OF FIVE-YEAR PLANS.

THE DRAFT DOES NOT PROMISE RADICAL INNOVATION IN THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE AREA OF NATIONALITY RELATIONS. WHILE IT PROMISES THE "FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND DRAWING TOGETHER" OF THE MANY NATIONALITIES, IT REGISTERS INCREASED STRESS ON THE CONCEPT OF THE "SOVIET PEOPLE" AND SOCIAL HOMOGENEITY, THUS SUPPLEMENTING THE REGIME'S CURRENT EFFORTS AT CULTURAL RUSSIFICATION.

IN GENERAL, ASIDE FROM THE PROVISOS AFFECTING THE TOP POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, THE NEW LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFT SEEMS LARGEly TO CODIFY EXISTING SOVIET LAW AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES. AS SUCH, IT IS NOT INNOVATIVE. NEVERTHELESS, MILLIONS OF WORDS WILL BE EXPENDED ON IT BEFORE IT IS "APPROVED" NEXT OCTOBER IN TIME FOR THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION.

END TEXT VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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